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are hereby delegated to the Investigating Authority. This final rule has been reviewed under the USDA criteria established to implement Executive Order 12044, "Improving Government Regulations." a determination has been made that this action should not be classified "significant" under those criteria. A Final Impact Statement has been prepared and is available from Carol M. Harvey in room 6622, South Agriculture Building, 14th and Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250.

PART 7—SELECTION AND FUNCTIONS OF AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION STATE, COUNTY AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

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AUTHORITY: Secs. 4 and 8 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended; 49 Stat. 164 and 1149, as amended (16 U.S.C. 590d and 590h).

SOURCE: 52 FR 48512, Dec. 23, 1987, unless otherwise noted.

§ 7.1 Administration.

(a) The regulations of this part are applicable to the election and functions of community and county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation ("ASC") committee and the functions of State ASC committees ("community", "county", and "State committees", respectively). State, county, and community committees shall be under the general supervision of the Administrator, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service ("ASCS").

(b) State, county, and community committees, and representatives and employees thereof, do not have authority to modify or waive any of the provisions of this part.

(c) The State committees shall take any action required by these regulations which has not been taken by the county committee. The State committee shall also:

(1) Correct, or require a county committee to correct, any action taken by such county committee which is not in accordance with this part, or

(2) Require a county committee to withhold taking any action which is not in accordance with this part.

(d) No provision or delegation herein to a State or county committee shall preclude the Administrator, ASCS, or a designee of the Administrator, from determining any question arising under

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this part, or from reversing or modifying any determination made by a State or county committee.

§ 7.2 General.

State, county, and community committees shall, as directed by the Secretary of a designee of the Secretary, carry out the programs and functions of the Secretary.

§ 7.3 Definitions.

The terms defined in part 719 of this title governing the reconstitution of farms shall also be applicable to this part.

§ 7.4 Selection of committee members.

State committee members shall be selected by the Secretary and shall serve at the pleasure of the Secretary. County and community committee members shall be elected in accordance with § 7.9 of this part.

§ 7.5 Eligible voters.

(a) Voters eligible to participate in:

(1) The direct election of county committee members and

(2) Community committee elections shall be persons who meet the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

(b) Any person, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, or national origin, who has an interest in a farm as owner, operator, tenant, or sharecropper and who is of legal voting age in the State in which the farm is located, and any person not of such legal voting age who is in charge of the supervision and conduct of the farming operations on an entire farm, shall be eligible to vote for direct election of county committee members or community committee members if such person is eligible to participate with respect to the farm in any program administered by the county committee.

(c) In any State having a community property law, the spouse of a person who is eligible to vote in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section shall also be eligible to vote.

(d) If an eligible voter is an entity other than an individual, the eligible voter's vote may be cast by a duly authorized representative of such entity, as determined by the Deputy Adminis-

trator, State and County Operations, ASCS ("Deputy Administrator").

(e) Each county office shall have a list of eligible voters for each community within the county available for public inspection in advance of the community committee election.

(f) Each eligible voter shall be entitled to only one ballot in any election held in any one local administrative area. If the eligible voter has an interest in land located in more than one community in the county, such voter shall not be entitled to vote in more than one community in the county. There shall be no voting by proxy.

§ 7.6 Determination of elective areas.

(a) *Local administrative areas and communities.* (1) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, there shall be three local administrative areas in each county. With respect to Alaska, the term "county" shall be the area so designated by the State committee.

(2) Each local administrative area shall have at least one community committee consisting of three members.

(3) The boundaries of the communities and local administrative areas shall be determined by the State committee after considering recommendations by the county committee.

(b) *Exceptions to general rule.* (1) A local administrative area may have more than one community committee if the county had more than three community committees on December 23, 1985.

(2) In counties with less than 150 producers, the county committee may reduce the number of communities to one.

(3) The Deputy Administrator may include more than one county or parts of different counties in a community if it is determined that there is an insufficient number of producers in an area to establish a slate of candidates for a community committee and hold an election.

(4) In counties which had less than three communities on December 23, 1985, the county committee may establish one community for the county.

(5) In any county where there is only one community, the community committee shall be the county committee.

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(c) The county committee shall give public notice of the community boundaries in advance of the election.

§ 7.7 Calling of elections.

(a) Each election of community committee members shall be held on a date, or within a specified period of time, determined by the Deputy Administrator. Such date or period of time shall fall within a period beginning on or after July 1 and ending not later than December 30 each year. Each such election shall be held in accordance with instructions issued by the Deputy Administrator which shall be available for examination in each county office.

(b) If the number of eligible voters voting in any election of community committee members is so small that the State committee determines that the result of the election does not represent the views of a substantial number of eligible voters, the State committee shall declare the election void and call a new election. If it is determined by the State committee that the election for any position on a community committee has not been held substantially in accordance with official instructions, the State committee shall declare such election void and call a new election.

§ 7.8 Conduct of community committee elections.

(a) The county committee serving at the time shall be responsible for the conduct of community committee elections in accordance with instructions issued by the Deputy Administrator.

(b) Elections shall not be associated with, or held in conjunction with, any other election or referendum conducted for any other purpose.

(c) The county committee shall give advance public notice of how, when, and where eligible voters may vote; when and where the votes will be counted; and the right to witness the vote counting.

(d) All nominees shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the election by the county executive director.

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§ 7.9 Election of community committee members, delegates to local administrative area and county conventions, and county committee members.

(a) Where there are three local administrative areas as provided in § 7.6 of this part there shall be an election of community committee members and alternates for a term of three years, or until such person's successor is elected and qualified, in one of the local administrative areas so that the term of office of the community committee members and alternates within one of the local administrative areas will expire each year.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, the eligible voters in a community shall elect every three years a community committee composed of three members and shall elect first and second alternates to serve as acting members of the community committee in the order elected in case of the temporary absence of a member, or to become a member of the community committee in the order elected in case of the resignation, disqualification, removal, or death of a member. An acting member of the community committee shall have the same duties and the same authority as a regular member of such committee. The election shall be conducted by mail ballot in all counties, except that the Deputy Administrator may authorize use of the meeting or polling place method in a specific county where such is deemed justified. Where elections are by mail or by polling place, the county committee shall give advance public notice that nominations may be made by petition. Election shall be by secret ballot and by plurality vote with each eligible voter having the option of writing in the names of candidates. Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section and § 7.10(c) of this part, the three regular members of the community committee shall be the delegates to the local administrative area and county conventions and the first and second alternates to community committee shall also be, in that order, alternate delegates to the local administrative area and county conventions. A person may not serve as delegate if such person has been a member of the county

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committee for that county during the 90 days preceding the community committee election. Failure to elect the prescribed number of alternates at the regular election shall not invalidate such election or require a special election to elect additional alternates.

(c) In any county where there is only one local administrative area, the community committee shall be the county committee.

(d) Where there is only one community in the county, one committee person shall be elected to hold office for a term of 3 years, or until such person's successor is elected and qualified, so that the term of office of one committee member will expire in each year. There shall also be elected annually a first alternate and second alternate to serve as acting members in the order elected in case of the temporary absence of a member or to become a member in the order elected in the case of resignation, disqualification, removal, or death of a member of the committee. In the event an alternate fills a permanent vacancy on the committee, such person shall assume the office until the next election or until the replaced committee member's successor is elected and qualified. An acting member shall have the same duties and authority as a regular member.

(e) In any county where there are three local administrative areas, the delegates elected pursuant to § 7.9 (a) and (b) of this part shall meet in a local administrative area convention held before the close of the same calendar year in which they were elected to elect a county committee member and a first and second alternate. A first and second alternate shall serve as acting members of the committee in the order elected in case of the temporary absence of a member, or to become a member in the order elected in case of the resignation, disqualification, removal, or death of a member of the county committee. In the event an alternate fills a permanent vacancy on the county committee, such person shall assume the unexpired term of the county committee member who was replaced. An acting member of the county committee shall have the same duties and authority as a member. The Deputy Administrator may fix the

exact convention date. Each delegate shall be entitled to only one vote on any ballot, and there shall be no voting by proxy. A majority of the delegates so elected and qualified to vote at the time of the convention shall constitute a quorum. Such convention shall be held to the extent practicable in the manner set forth in § 7.10 of this part and in accordance with instructions issued by the Deputy Administrator.

[52 FR 48512, Dec. 23, 1987, as amended at 53 FR 23749, June 24, 1988]

§ 7.10 Conduct of county convention.

(a) The county committee serving at the time shall be responsible for designating the place at which the county convention will be held and for the conduct of the convention in accordance with instructions issued by the Deputy Administrator.

(b) The delegates to the county convention shall determine which county committee members shall be the county committee chairperson and county committee vice-chairperson.

(c) Each local administrative area shall have the same number of delegates at the county convention. If a portion of the delegates from a local administrative area are precluded from attending the county convention as the result of the limitation imposed by the preceding sentence, the delegates from such local administrative area shall elect those delegates who shall attend the county convention.

(d) County conventions shall not be associated with or held in conjunction with any other election or referendum conducted for any other purpose.

(e) The county committee shall give advance public notice of the county convention which shall be open to the public.

(f) The county executive director shall notify in writing all newly elected county committee members, alternates, and county committee members with unexpired terms of the election results.

§ 7.11 County committee members.

(a) County committee members elected in accordance with § 7.9 of this part shall hold office for a term of three years or until a successor is elected and qualified.

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(b) The county committee shall select a secretary who shall be the county executive director, other employee of the county committee, or the county agricultural extension agent for the county. If the county agricultural extension agent is not selected as secretary to the county committee, that person shall be an ex officio member of the county committee but shall not have the power to vote.

[52 FR 48512, Dec. 23, 1987, as amended at 53 FR 23750, June 24, 1988]

§ 7.12 Tie votes.

(a) Tie votes in community committee elections held by mail or polling place method shall be settled by lot. Tie votes in such elections held by the meeting method which cannot be settled by further balloting on the same day shall be settled by lot. In counties with one local administrative area, a tie vote in determining the chairperson and vice chairperson of the county committee which cannot be settled by further balloting on the same day shall be settled by lot.

(b) In the county or local administrative area convention, tie votes which cannot be settled by further balloting on the same day shall be settled by lot.

§ 7.13 Vacancies.

(a) In case of a vacancy in the office of chairperson of county or community committee, the respective vice chairperson shall become chairperson; in case of a vacancy in the office of vice chairperson, the respective third member shall become vice chairperson; in case of a vacancy in the office of the third member, the respective first alternate shall become the third member; and in case of a vacancy in the office of the first alternate, the respective second alternate shall become the first alternate. When unanimously recommended by the three members of the county committee, as constituted under this paragraph and paragraph (c) of this section, and approved by the State committee, the offices of chairperson and vice chairperson of the county committee may be filled from such membership without regard to the order of succession prescribed in this paragraph or the action of the delegates to the county convention.

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(b) In case of a vacancy in the panel of delegates to the local administrative area or county convention, the respective community committee alternates shall act as delegates.

(c) In the event that a vacancy, other than one caused by temporary absence, occurs in the membership of the county committee and no alternate is available to fill the vacancy, the State committee shall call a meeting of the delegates of the appropriate community committees to elect persons to fill such vacancies as exist in the membership of the county committee and in the panel of alternates, except as provided in § 7.28 of this part.

(d) In the event that a vacancy, other than one caused by temporary absence, occurs in the membership of the community committee and no alternate is available to fill the vacancy, a special election shall be held to fill such vacancies as exist in the membership and in the panel of alternates.

§ 7.14 Appeals.

(a) Any eligible voter in the county may appeal to the county committee in writing or in person, or both:

(1) The eligibility or ineligibility of a person to vote,

(2) The eligibility of a person to hold office, and

(3) The validity of the community committee elections. Such appeal must be made within 15 days of the election date, except that appeals on a determination of eligibility of a person nominated by petition must be made within 7 days of the date of notification of ineligibility.

(b) Any eligible voter in the county may appeal to the State committee in writing, in person, or both:

(1) A county committee decision on an election appeal. An appeal of a county committee decision must be made within 15 days of the notification of the decision, and

(2) The validity of a county convention. An appeal on the validity of a county convention must be made within 15 days of the county convention.

§ 7.15 Eligibility requirements of county committee members, community committee members, and delegates.

(a) To be eligible to hold office as a county committee member, community committee member, a delegate, or an alternate to any such office, a person must meet the conditions set forth in this section.

(b) Such person must:

(1) Be eligible to vote in the local administrative area in which the election is held if proposed for county committee member or alternate, or in the community in which the election is held if proposed for community committee member or alternate;

(2)(i) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section, be residing in the local administrative area in which the election is held if proposed for county committee member or alternate, or be residing in the community in which the election is held if proposed for community committee member or alternate.

(ii) In cases where a State line, a county line, a local administrative area boundary, or a community boundary runs through a farm, eligible persons residing on such farm may hold office in the county or community in which the farm has been determined to be located for program participation purposes. In cases where a candidate has no farming interests in the local administrative area or community in which the person resides or only a token amount, as determined by the State committee, an eligible person may hold office when such person resides in the county and has farming interests in the local administrative area or community in which the person is a candidate.

(3) Not be ineligible under § 7.27 of this part.

(4) Not have been dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services; removed for cause from any public office; convicted of any fraud, larceny, embezzlement, or felony, unless any such disqualification is waived by the State committee or the Deputy Administrator;

(5) Not have been removed as a county committee member, community committee member, delegate, alternate to any such office, or as an employee

for: Failure to perform the duties of the office; committing, attempting, or conspiring to commit fraud; incompetence; impeding the effectiveness of any program administered in the county; refusal to carry out or failure to comply with the Department's policy relating to equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy, or interfering with others in carrying out such policy; or for violation of official instructions, unless any such disqualification is waived by the State committee or the Deputy Administrator;

(6) Not have been disqualified for future service because of a determination by a State committee that during previous service as a county committee member, community committee member, delegate, alternate of any such office, or as an employee of the county committee such person has: Failed to perform the duties of such office or employment; committed, attempted, or conspired to commit fraud; impeded the effectiveness of any program administered in the county; in the course of their official duties, refused to carry out or failed to comply with the Department's policy relating to equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy, or interfered with others in carrying out such policy; or violated official instructions, unless any such disqualification is waived by the State committee or the Deputy Administrator;

(7) During the term of office, not be a full-time employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture;

(8) If the office is that of county committee member, not be a sales agent or employee of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation during the term of office;

(9) If the office is that of delegate to the local administrative area or county convention, not have been a county committee member for that county during the 90 days preceding the community election;

(10) If the office is that of county committee member, not be serving as a county committee member with one or more years following the current election remaining in the term of office; and

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(11) If the office is that of county committee member, not have served three consecutive terms as county committee member just prior to the current election, except that:

(i) Any partial term served by an alternate who filled a permanent vacancy on the county committee, shall not count toward this three term limitation; and

(ii) In the case of a person elected to be a national officer or State president of the National Association of Farmer Elected Committeemen, the limitation shall be four consecutive terms.

[52 FR 48512, Dec. 23, 1987, as amended at 59 FR 15827, Apr. 5, 1994]

§7.16 Eligibility requirements of all other personnel.

(a) The county executive director and other employees of the county committee must not have been: Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services; removed for cause from any public office; or convicted of any fraud, larceny, embezzlement, or felony, unless any such disqualification is waived by the State committee or the Deputy Administrator.

(b) The county executive director or any other employee of the county committee must not have been removed as a county committee member, community committee member, delegate, alternate to any such office, county executive director, or other employee of the county committee for: Failure to perform the duties of the office; committing, attempting, or conspiring to commit fraud; incompetence; impeding the effectiveness of any program administered in the county; refusal to carry out or failure to comply with the Department's policy relating to equal opportunity and civil rights, including equal employment policy, or interfering with others in carrying out such policy; or for violation of official instructions, unless such disqualification is waived by the State committee or the Deputy Administrator.

(c) The county executive director or any other employee of the county committee must not have been disqualified for future employment because of a determination by a State committee that during previous service as a county committee member, community com-

mittee member, delegate, alternate to any such office, or as an employee of the county committee has: Failed to perform the duties of such office or employment; committed, attempted, or conspired to commit fraud; impeded the effectiveness of any program administered in the county; refused to carry out or failed to comply with the Department's policy relating to equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy, or interfered with others in carrying out such policy; or violated official instructions, unless such disqualification is waived by the State committee or the Deputy Administrator.

(d) The tenure of employment of any county executive director or other employee of the county committee shall be terminated as soon as any such person becomes ineligible for employment under the provisions of this section.

§7.17 Dual office.

(a) *County committee membership.* A member of the county committee may not be at the same time:

(1) A member of a community committee;

(2) A delegate to a local administrative area convention;

(3) A delegate to a county convention;

(4) The secretary to the county committee;

(5) A member of the State committee; or

(6) County executive director or any other county office employee.

(b) *Community committee membership.* A member of the community committee may not be at the same time:

(1) A member of a county committee;

(2) The secretary to the county committee;

(3) A member of the State committee; or

(4) County executive director or regular county office employee.

(c) *Delegate to conventions.* A delegate to the local administrative area or county convention may not be a member of the State committee.

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§ 7.18 Terms of office of county and community members.

The term of office of county and community committee members and alternates to such office shall begin on a date fixed by the Deputy Administrator, which shall be after their election and not later than the first day in the next January. Before any such county committee members or alternate county committee members may take office, such person shall sign an oath of office pledge that they will faithfully, fairly, and honestly perform to the best of their ability all of the duties devolving on them as committee members. A term of office shall continue until a successor is elected and qualified as provided in §§ 7.8 and 7.9 of this part.

§ 7.19 Terms of office of delegates to the conventions.

The terms of office of delegates and alternates to the local administrative area and county conventions shall begin immediately upon their election and shall continue until their respective successors have elected and qualified.

§ 7.20 State committee duties.

The State committee, subject to the general direction and supervision of the Deputy Administrator, shall be generally responsible for carrying out in the State the agricultural conservation program, the production adjustment and price support programs, the acreage allotment and marketing quota programs, the wool and mohair incentive payment program, and any other program or function assigned by the Secretary or a designee of the Secretary.

§ 7.21 County committee duties.

(a) The county committee, subject to the general direction and supervision of the State committee, and acting through community committee members and other personnel, shall be generally responsible for carrying out in the county the agricultural conservation program, the production adjustment and price support programs, the acreage allotment and marketing quota programs, the wool and mohair incentive payment program, and any

other program or function assigned by the Secretary or a designee of the Secretary.

(b) The county committee shall:

(1) Enter into leasing agreements for such office space as needed in accordance with official instructions.

(2) Employ the county executive director, subject to standards and qualifications furnished by the State committee, to serve at the pleasure of the county committee, except that incumbent directors shall not be removed other than in accordance with the provisions of § 7.28 of this part until all members of the county committee have been in office for at least 90 days. There shall be no employment discrimination due to race, religion, color, sex, age, or national origin. The county executive director may not be removed for advocating or carrying out the Department's policy on equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy. In the event it is claimed that dismissal is for such reasons, the dismissal shall not become effective until the State committee and the Deputy Administrator have determined that dismissal was not because of such reasons;

(3) Direct the activities of the local committees elected in the county;

(4) Pursuant to official instructions, review, approve, and certify forms, reports, and documents requiring such action in accordance with such instructions;

(5) Recommend to the State committee needed changes in boundaries of community and local administrative areas;

(6) Make available to farmers and the public, information concerning the objectives and operations of the programs administered through the county committee;

(7) Make available to agencies of the Federal Government and others information with respect to the county committee activities in accordance with official instructions issued;

(8) Give public notice of the designation and boundaries of each community within the county not less than 50 days prior to the election of community committee members and delegates;

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(9) Direct the giving of notices in accordance with applicable regulations and official instructions;

(10) Recommend to the State committee desirable changes in or additions to existing programs;

(11) Conduct such hearings and investigations as the State committee may request; and

(12) Perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the State committee.

§ 7.22 Community committee duties.

(a) The community committee shall be subject to the general direction and supervision of the county committee.

(b) The community committee shall:

(1) Serve as an advisor and consultant to the county committee;

(2) Periodically meet with the county committee and State committee to be informed on farm program issues;

(3) Communicate with producers on issues or concerns regarding farm programs;

(4) Report to the county committee, the State committee, and other interested persons on changes to, or modification of, farm programs recommended by producers;

(5) Perform such other functions as are required by law or as the Secretary or a designee of the Secretary may specify.

§ 7.23 Chairperson of the county committee duties.

The chairperson of the county committee or the person acting as the chairperson shall preside at meetings of the county committee, certify such documents as may require the chairperson's certification, and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the State committee.

§ 7.24 Chairperson of the community committee duties.

The chairperson of the community committee or the person acting as the chairperson shall preside at meetings of the community committee, and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the county committee.

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§ 7.25 County executive director duties.

(a) The county executive director shall execute the policies established by the county committee and be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the county office.

(b) The county executive director shall:

(1) In accordance with standards and qualifications furnished by the State committee, employ the personnel of the county office to serve at the pleasure of the county executive director. There shall be no employment discrimination due to race, religion, color, sex, age, or national origin. An employee may not be removed under this paragraph for advocating or carrying out the Department's policy on equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy. In the event it is claimed that the dismissal is for such reason, the dismissal shall not become effective until the State committee and the Deputy Administrator have determined that dismissal was not because of such reason;

(2) Receive, dispose of, and account for all funds, negotiable instruments, or property coming into the custody of the county committee;

(3) Serve as counselor to the local administrative area and county convention chairperson on election procedures; and

(4) Supervise, under the direction of the county committee, the activities of the community committees elected in the county.

§ 7.26 Private business activity and conflicts of interest.

(a) No county committee member, community committee member, delegate, alternate to any such office, or county office employee shall at any time use such office or employment to promote any private business interest.

(b) County committee members, community committee members, delegates, or alternates, and any person employed in the county office shall be subject to the official instructions issued with respect to conflicts of interest and proper conduct.

§ 7.27 Political activity.

(a) No person may be a member of the county governing body or hold a Federal, State, or county office filled by an election held pursuant to law or be employed by any such office and also hold office as a county committee member, community committee member, delegate, alternate to such office, or be employed in any capacity, except, that members of school boards, soil conservation district boards, weed control district boards, or of similar boards are not ineligible to hold office or employment under this paragraph solely because of membership on such boards.

(b) No person may be a candidate for membership on the county governing body or for any Federal, State, or county office filled by an election held pursuant to law and hold office as a county committee member, community committee member, delegate, alternate to any such office, or be employed in any capacity, except, that candidates for school boards, soil conservation district boards, irrigation district boards, drainage district boards, weed control district boards, or for similar boards are not ineligible to hold office or employment under this subsection solely because of candidacy for such boards.

(c) No person may be an officer, employee, or delegate to a convention of any political party or political organization and hold office as a county committee member, community committee member, delegate, alternate to any such office, or be employed in any capacity.

(d) The tenure of office of any county committee member, community committee member, delegate, alternate to any such office, or the employment of any employee, shall be automatically terminated as soon as any such person becomes ineligible for office of employment under the provisions of paragraph (a), (b), or (c) of this section.

(e) No county committee member, community committee member, delegate, or alternate to any such office, or any employee shall at any time engage in the following political activities:

(1) Solicit or receive any contributions (including the sale of tickets) for political party organizations or for a

candidate for political office or for any other political purpose in any room or building used for the transaction of any Federal official business, or at any place from any other county committee member, community committee member, delegate, or alternate to any such office or employee.

(2) Use official authority or influence to discharge, remove, demote, or promote any employee, or threaten or promise to so do, for withholding or giving contributions (including the buying or the refusal to buy tickets) for political purposes, or for supporting or opposing any candidate or any political organization in any primary, general, or special election for political office.

(3) Use or direct or permit the use of any official space, equipment, materials, supplies, or personal services either to support or oppose any political office holder, candidate or party, or for any other political purpose.

(f) A county committee member or alternate to such office, an employee on any day when entitled to receive pay for services in performance of duties, or an employee who serves during a continuous period of 90 days or more and has a regular tour of duty established in advance at any time, shall not solicit, collect, receive, disburse, or otherwise handle contributions of money, pledges, gifts, or anything of value (including the sale of tickets) made for:

(1) Political party organizations;

(2) A candidate for political office in any primary, general, or special election, but excluding such activities on behalf of individual candidates in township and municipal elections; or

(3) Any other political purpose.

[52 FR 48512, Dec. 23, 1987; 53 FR 1441, Jan. 19, 1988]

§ 7.28 Removal from office or employment for cause.

(a) Any county committee member, community committee member, delegate to the local administrative area convention or the county convention, an alternate to any such office, county executive director, or any other county employee who: Fails to perform the duties of office; commits or attempts, or

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conspires to commit fraud; is incompetent; impedes the effectiveness of any program administered in the county; violates the provisions of § 7.27 (e) or (f) of this part; refuses to carry out or fails to comply with the equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy, or who interferes with others in carrying out such policy; or violates official instructions, shall be suspended from office or employment. Any person who is under formal investigation for any of the above-cited reasons may be suspended. The suspension action may be taken by the county executive director with respect to any other employee, or by the county committee or State committee with respect to the county executive director or any other county employee and by the State committee with respect to any county committee member, community committee member, delegate to the local administrative area convention or the county convention, or any alternate to any such office. Any person suspended shall be given a written statement of the reasons for such action and be allowed 15 days from the date of mailing of the notice of suspension in which to advise the county committee, or the State committee if it made the suspension, in writing, in person, or both, why such person should be restored to duty.

(b) The county committee or the county executive director, or the State committee if it made the suspension, following such further investigation as is deemed necessary shall restore to duty or remove the suspended person. The county committee or county executive director may not restore a suspended person to duty without prior written approval of the State committee, and, if such approval is denied, shall promptly remove such person. Upon refusal or failure of the county committee or the county executive director to remove promptly the suspended person, the State committee shall remove such person. In the event further investigation develops reasons for the action taken, in addition to those disclosed in the suspension notice, the suspended person shall be given written notification of such additional reasons and allowed 15 days from the date of mailing of the notice of ad-

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ditional reasons for the suspension in which to advise why such person should be restored to duty. In the event a person under suspension submits a resignation, acceptance thereof shall not prevent a determination by the county committee or State committee that such person would have been removed had the person remained in the position. Such determination shall constitute removal within the meaning of §§ 7.27 (e) and 7.28(c) of this part. The person so removed shall be given written notification of any such determination and the reasons therefor.

(c) Any incumbent or former county committee member, community committee member, delegate to the local administrative area convention or the county convention, an alternate to any such office, county executive director, or any other county employee who during a term of employment: Fails or failed to perform the duties of employment; committed, attempted, or conspired to commit fraud; was incompetent; impeded the effectiveness of any program administered in the county; violated the provisions of § 7.27 (e) or (f) of this part; refused to carry out or failed to comply with the Department's policy relating to equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy; or violated official instructions, may be disqualified for future service or employment by the State committee. Before any such disqualification determination is made, the State committee shall undertake such investigation as it deems necessary, after which the State committee shall give the affected person a written statement of the determination for the proposed disqualification action. Such person shall have 15 days from the date of receipt of such determination to advise in writing, in person or both, why the action should not be taken. If any further investigation develops substantial additional reasons for disqualification, the person involved shall be given a written statement of such reasons and 15 days from the date of mailing in which to respond. The State committee may remove the disqualification for future service or employment only with prior approval of the Deputy Administrator.

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(d) Any county committee member, community committee member, delegate to the local administrative area convention or the county convention, or any alternate to any such office, county executive director, or any other county employee, who, prior to taking such persons's present office: Committed, or attempted or conspired to commit fraud; or impeded the effectiveness of any program administered in the county, may be suspended. Any such person who is under formal investigation for any reason set forth in this section may be suspended. The proceedings under this paragraph shall be applied the same as provided in paragraph (a) of this section.

(e) If in the event of suspensions or vacancies there are less than two members, including alternates, available to serve on the county committee, the State committee shall designate a person to administer the programs in the county pending the exoneration or removal of those persons under investigation and, if removed, pending the election of new county committee members and alternates. Such person may be the remaining member or alternate member of the committee if available. Any person named by the State committee to serve in such capacity shall have full authority to perform all duties regularly performed by a duly elected county committee.

§ 7.29 Delegation of authority to Deputy Administrator.

Notwithstanding the authority vested by this part in a State committee, a county committee, and the county executive director, the Deputy Administrator shall have authority to suspend and/or remove or disqualify for future service or employment, any county committee member, community committee member, delegate to the local administrative area convention or the county convention, an alternate to any such office, county executive director, or other county employee, for any and all of the reasons and causes authorizing such suspension, removal, and disqualification by the State committee, the county committee, or the county executive director. Any person suspended, removed or disqualified pursuant to this section shall be given a

written statement of the reason for such action and shall be advised of the right of review as provided in § 7.30 of this part.

§ 7.30 Right of review.

Any person dissatisfied with a determination of the county committee or county executive director may appeal in writing or in person or both, such determination to the State committee. Any person dissatisfied with a determination of the State committee may appeal such determination in writing to the Deputy Administrator. Any person dissatisfied with the determination of the Deputy Administrator made under § 7.29 of this part may request a reconsideration of such determination by the Deputy Administrator. Any such appeal or request for reconsideration shall be made within 15 days from the date of the mailing of the determination with respect to which the appeal or request is filed. Except as provided in § 7.31 of this part, such appeals and requests for reconsideration shall be determined on an informal basis. The person filing the appeal or request for reconsideration may present reasons, in writing or in person, or both, why the determination should be reversed or modified. Within 60 days after the reasons have been presented, such person shall be notified of the determination on appeal or reconsideration. The notification shall clearly set forth the basis for the determination. The determination of the Deputy Administrator is final and not subject to further administrative review.

§ 7.31 Hearing in connection with appeals and requests for reconsideration to Deputy Administrator.

Any person (the "appellant") filing an appeal with the Deputy Administrator, or a request for reconsideration of a determination made by the Deputy Administrator under § 7.29 of this part, is entitled, at such person's election, to a hearing in connection therewith. If the appellant does not request a hearing, the appeal or reconsideration shall be handled in accordance with § 7.30 of this part. If the appellant desires a hearing, such person shall so advise the Deputy Administrator. The hearing

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shall be conducted by the Deputy Administrator, or a designee of the Deputy Administrator, who shall serve as a hearing officer. The hearing shall be held at the time and place designated by the hearing officer. The appellant may appear personally or through or accompanied by a representative. The hearing officer shall conduct the hearing so as to bring out pertinent facts, including the production of pertinent documents. Rules of evidence shall not be applied strictly, but the hearing officer shall exclude irrelevant or unduly repetitious evidence. Information having a bearing on the issues shall be received in evidence. Both the appellant and the agency representatives are entitled to produce witnesses and the appellant and agency representative shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine witnesses. The hearing officer shall inform the witnesses that they are subject to a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or both, for making any false statements (18 U.S.C. 1001). The hearing officer shall cause a transcript to be made of the hearing and it shall be made available to the appellant at actual costs.

§ 7.32 Findings, analysis, and recommendations of hearing officer.

If the hearing has been conducted by a designee of the Deputy Administrator, the hearing officer shall, within 60 days from date of receipt of the transcript transmit to the Deputy Administrator:

- (a) The record of the hearing;
- (b) The findings and analysis of the hearing officer; and
- (c) A recommended determination.

§ 7.33 Determination of the Deputy Administrator.

Within 30 days after receipt of the findings, analysis, and recommendations of the hearing officer that are made under § 7.32 of this part, or within 60 days from the date of receipt of the transcript prepared under such section if the Deputy Administrator conducted the hearing, the Deputy Administrator shall make a final determination. The notification shall clearly set forth the basis for the determination. The determination of the Deputy Administrator

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is final and not subject to further administrative review.

§ 7.34 Custody and use of books, records, and documents.

(a) All books, records, and documents of or used by the county committee in the administration of programs assigned to it, or in the conduct of elections, shall be the property of the Commodity Credit Corporation or the United States Department of Agriculture, as applicable, and shall be maintained in good order in the county office.

(b) For polling and mail type elections, ballots shall remain in sealed boxes until the prescribed date for counting. Following the counting of ballots in all types of elections, the ballots shall be placed in sealed containers and retained for 30 days unless otherwise determined by the State committee.

(c) The books, records, and documents referred to in paragraph (a) shall be available for use and examination:

(1) At all times by authorized representatives of the Secretary; the Administrator, or a designee of the Administrator.

(2) By state, county, and community committee members, and authorized employees of the State and county office in the performance of duties assigned to them under this part, subject to instructions issued by the Deputy Administrator;

(3) At any reasonable time to any program participant insofar as such person's interests under the programs administered by the county committee may be affected, subject to instructions issued by the Deputy Administrator; and

(4) To any other person only in accordance with instructions issued by the Deputy Administrator.

§ 7.35 Administrative operations.

The administrative operations of county committees including but not limited to the following, shall be conducted, except as otherwise provided in these regulations, in accordance with official instructions issued: annual, sick, and other types of employee leave; location and use of the county

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committee office; the calling, and conduct of elections; and the maintenance of records of county and local committee meetings.

§ 7.36 Implementation.

Unless specifically provided in this part, the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations, or the Deputy Administrator, Management, ASCS, is authorized to issue the instructions and procedures referred to herein which implement the provisions of this part.

§ 7.37 Applicability.

This part shall apply to each State of the United States.

§ 7.38 Retention of authority.

Nothing in this part shall preclude the Secretary, the Administrator, or the Deputy Administrator from administering any or all programs or exercising other functions delegated to the community committee, county committee, State committee, or any employee of such committees. In exercising this authority, the Secretary, the Administrator, or the Deputy Administrator may designate for such period of time as deemed necessary a person or persons of their choice to be in charge will full authority to carry on the programs or other functions without regard to the normal duties of such committees or employees.

PART 8—4-H CLUB NAME AND EMBLEM

Sec.

- 8.1 Policy.
- 8.2 Delegation of authority.
- 8.3 Definitions.
- 8.4 Basic premises.
- 8.5 Revocation of present authorizations.
- 8.6 Authorization for use.
- 8.7 Continued use.
- 8.8 Use by public informational services.
- 8.9 Use in 4-H fund raising.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301; 18 U.S.C. 707.

SOURCE: 50 FR 31582, Aug. 2, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

§ 8.1 Policy.

The Cooperative Extension Service, of which the 4-H Club program is a part, invites and appreciates the co-

operation of all organizations, agencies, and individuals whose interest, products, or services will contribute to the educational effort of the Cooperative Extension Service as conducted through the 4-H Club program.

§ 8.2 Delegation of authority.

The Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, may authorize the use of the 4-H Club Name and Emblem in accordance with the regulations in this part.

[50 FR 31582, Aug. 2, 1985, as amended at 60 FR 52293, Oct. 6, 1995]

§ 8.3 Definitions.

4-H Club Name and Emblem as used in this part means the emblem consisting of a green four-leaf clover with stem and the letter "H" in white or gold on each leaflet, or any insignia in colorable imitation thereof, or the words, "4-H Club," "4-H Clubs" or any combination of these or other words or characters in colorable imitation thereof.

Cooperative Extension Service, as used in this part includes the entire Cooperative Extension System consisting of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture; the State Cooperative Extension Services; and the County Cooperative Extension Services.

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture as used in this part means the Federal agency within the United States Department of Agriculture which administers Federal agricultural cooperative extension programs.

County Cooperative Extension Service as used in this part refers to a county Extension office or equivalent Extension office operating under a State Cooperative Extension Service.

State Cooperative Extension Service as used in this part means an organization established at the land-grant college or university under the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914, as amended (7 U.S.C. 341-349); section 209(b) of the Act of October 26, 1974, as amended (D.C. Code, through section 31-1719(b)); or